

**Status of Claims**

The claims are not amended in this submission and for ease of reference are listed as follows.

Claims 1-5 (previously canceled)

Claim 6 (previously presented)

Claims 7-9 (previously presented)

Claim 10 (previously presented)

Claim 11 (previously presented)

1. (previously canceled)

2. (previously canceled)

3. (previously canceled)

4. (previously canceled)

5. (previously canceled)

6. (previously presented) A process for producing ethyl acetate comprising:

(a) reacting acetic acid and ethanol in a reaction zone;

(b) directing vapors formed in the reaction zone to a distillation means to form an azeotrope containing 10 wt. % or less of water;

(c) condensing the azeotrope to form a condensate;

(d) separating the condensate into an organic phase rich in ethyl acetate and an aqueous phase rich in water; and

(e) directing at least a portion of the organic phase rich in ethyl acetate to the reaction zone as an azeotroping agent.

7. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein at least a portion of the organic phase is directed to a membrane separation unit to form a dried organic stream.

8. (previously presented) The process of claim 7 wherein at least a portion of the dried organic stream is directed to the distillation means.

9. (previously presented) The process of claim 8 wherein at least a portion of the dried organic stream is directed to the reaction zone.

10. (previously presented) A process for producing ethyl acetate comprising:

(a) reacting acetic acid and ethanol in a reaction zone;

(b) directing vapors formed in the reaction zone to a distillation means to form an azeotrope containing 10 wt. % or less of water;

(c) condensing the azeotrope to form an condensate;

- (d) separating the condensate into an organic phase rich in ethyl acetate and an aqueous phase rich in water; and
- (e) directing at least a portion of the organic phase rich in ethyl acetate to a membrane separation unit to form a dried organic stream; and
- (f) directing at least a portion of the dried organic stream to the distillation means as an azeotroping agent.

11. (previously presented) The process according to claim 10 wherein at least a portion of the dried organic stream is directed to the reaction zone.